"OVER THE TOP"

BY AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT ★ ★

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

CHAPTER XXVI—Continued.

—26—

Right now I can see the butt of that gun trembling. The Scottie made a complete turn in the air, hit the ground, rolling over twice, each time clawing at the earth, and then remained still, about four feet from me, in a sort of sitting position. I called to him, "Are you hurt badly, Jock?" but no answer. He was dead. A dark red smudge was coming through his tunic right under the heart. The blood ran down his bare knees, making a horrible sight. On his right side he carried his water bottle. I was crazy for a drink and tried to reach this, but for the life of me could not negotiate that four feet. Then I became unconscious. When I woke up I was in an advanced first-aid post. I asked the doctor if we had taken the trench. "We took the trench and the wood beyond, all right," he said, "and you fellows did your bit; but, my lad, that was thirty-six hours ago. You were lying in No Man's Land in that bally hole for a day and a half. It's a wonder you are alive." He also told me that out of the twenty that were in the raiding party, seventeen were killed. The officer died of wounds in crawling back to our trench and I was severely wounded, but one fellow returned without a scratch, without any prisoners. No doubt this chap was the one who had sneezed and improperly cut the barbed wire.

In the official communique our trench raid was described as follows:

"All quiet on the western front, excepting in the neighborhood of Gommecourt wood, where one of our raiding parties penetrated into the German lines."

It is needless to say that we had no use for our persuaders or come-alongs, as we brought back no prisoners, and until I die Old Pepper's words, "Personally I don't believe that that part of the German trench is occupied," will always come to me when I hear some fellow trying to get away with a fishy statement. I will judge it accordingly.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Blighty.

From this first-aid post, after inoculating me with antitetanus serum to prevent lockjaw, I was put into an ambulance and sent to a temporary hospital behind the lines. To reach this hospital we had to go along a road about five miles in length. This road was under shell fire, for now and then a flare would light up the sky—a tremendous explosion—and then the road seemed to tremble. We did not mind, though no doubt some of us wished that a shell would hit us and end our misery. Personally, I was not particular. It was nothing but bump, jolt, rattle, and bang.

Several times the driver would turn around and give us a "Cheero, mates, we'll soon be there—" fine fellows, those ambulance drivers, a lot of them go West, too.

We gradually drew out of the fire zone and pulled up in front of an immense dugout. Stretcher-bearers carried me down a number of steps and placed me on a white table in a brightly lighted room.

A sergeant of the Royal Army Medical corps removed my bandages and cut off my tunic. Then the doctor, with his sleeves rolled up, took charge. He winked at me and I winked back, and then he asked, "How do you feel, smashed up a bit?"

I answered: "I'm all right, but I'd give a quid for a drink of Bass."

He nodded to the sergeant, who disappeared, and I'll be darned if he didn't return with a glass of ale. I could only open my mouth about a quarter of an inch, but I got away with every drop of that ale. It tasted just like Blighty, and that is heaven to Tommy.

The doctor said something to an orderly, the only word I could catch was "chloroform," then they put some kind of an arrangement over my nose and mouth and it was me for dreamland.

When I opened my eyes I was lying on a stretcher, in a low wooden building. Everywhere I looked I saw rows of Tommies on stretchers, some dead to the world, and the rest with fags in their mouths.

The main topic of their conversation was Blighty. Nearly all had a grin on their faces, except those who didn't have enough face left to grin with. I grinned with my right eye, the other was bandaged.

Stretcher-bearers came in and began to carry the Tommies outside. You could hear the chug of the engines in the waiting ambulances.

I was put into an ambulance with three others and away we went for an eighteen-mile ride.

I was on a bottom stretcher. The lad right across from me was smashed up something horrible.

Right above me was a man from the Royal Irish rifles, while across from him was a Scotchman.

We had gone about three miles when I heard the death-rattle in the throat of the man opposite. He had gone to rest across the Great Divide. I think at the time I envied him.

The man of the Royal Irish rifles had had his left foot blown off, the jolting of the ambulance over the rough road had loosened up the bandages on his foot, and had started it bleeding again. This blood ran down the side of the stretcher and started dripping. I was lying on my back, too weak to move, and the dripping of this blood got me in my unbandaged right eye. I closed my eye and pretty soon could not open the lid; the blood had congealed and closed it, as if it were glued down.

An English girl dressed in khaki was driving the ambulance, while beside her on the seat was a corporal of the R. A. M. C. They kept up a running conversation about Blighty which almost wrecked my nerves; pretty soon from the stretcher above me, the Irishman became aware of the fact that the bandage from his foot had become loose; it must have pained him horribly, because he yelled in a loud voice:

"If you don't stop this bloody death wagon and fix this d—— bandage on my foot, I will get out and walk."

The girl on the seat turned around and in a sympathetic voice asked, "Poor fellow, are you very badly wounded?"

The Irishman, at this question, let out a howl of indignation and answered, "Am I very badly wounded, what bloody cheek; no, I'm not wounded, I've only been kicked by a canary bird."

The ambulance immediately stopped, and the corporal came to the rear and fixed him up, and also washed out my right eye. I was too weak to thank him, but it was a great relief. Then I must have become unconscious, because when I regained my senses, the ambulance was at a standstill, and my stretcher was being removed from it.

It was night, lanterns were flashing here and there, and I could see stretcher-bearers hurrying to and fro. Then I was carried into a hospital train.

The inside of this train looked like heaven to me, just pure white, and we met our first Red Cross nurses; we thought they were angels. And they were.

Nice little soft bunks and clean, white sheets.

A Red Cross nurse sat beside me during the whole ride which lasted three hours. She was holding my wrist; I thought I had made a hit, and tried to tell her how I got wounded, but she would put her finger to her lips and say, "Yes, I know, but you mustn't talk now, try to go to sleep, it'll do you good, doctor's orders." Later on I learned that she was taking my pulse every few minutes, as I was very weak from the loss of blood and they expected me to snuff it, but I didn't.

From the train we went into ambulances for a short ride to the hospital ship Panama. Another palace and more angels. I don't remember the trip across the channel.

I opened my eyes; I was being carried on a stretcher through lanes of people, some cheering, some waving flags, and others crying. The flags were Union Jacks, I was in Southampton. Blighty at last. My stretcher was strewn with flowers, cigarettes, and chocolates. Tears started to run down my cheek from my good eye. I like a booby was crying. Can you beat it?—

Then into another hospital train, a five-hour ride to Paignton, another ambulance ride, and then I was carried into Munsey ward of the American Women's War hospital and put into a real bed.

This real bed was too much for my unstrung nerves and I fainted.

When I came to, a pretty Red Cross nurse was bending over me, bathing my forehead with cold water, then she left and the ward orderly placed a screen around my bed, and gave me a much-needed bath and clean pajamas. Then the screen was removed and a bowl of steaming soup was given me. It tasted delicious.

Before finishing my soup the nurse came back to ask me my name and number. She put this information down in a little book and then asked:

"Where do you come from?" I answered:

"From the big town behind the Statue of Liberty;" upon hearing this she started jumping up and down, clapping her hands, and calling out to three nurses across the ward:

"Come here, girls—at last we have got a real live Yankee with us."

They came over and besieged me with questions, until the doctor arrived. Upon learning that I was an American he almost crushed my hand in his grip of welcome. They also were Americans, and were glad to see me.

The doctor very tenderly removed my bandages and told me, after viewing my wounds, that he would have to take me to the operating theater immediately. Personally I didn't care what was done with me.

In a few minutes, four orderlies who looked like undertakers dressed in white, brought a stretcher to my bed and placing me on it carried me out of the ward, across a courtyard to the operating room or "pictures," as Tommy calls it.

I don't remember having the anesthestic applied.

When I came to I was again lying in a bed in Munsey ward. One of the nurses had draped a large American flag over the head of the bed, and clasped in my hand was a smaller flag, and it made me feel good all over to again see the "Stars and Stripes."

At that time I wondered when the boys in the trenches would see the emblem of the "land of the free and the home of the brave" beside them, doing its bit in this great war of civilization.

My wounds were very painful, and several times at night I would dream that myriads of khaki-clothed figures would pass my bed and each would stop, bend over me, and whisper, "The best of luck, mate."

Soaked with perspiration I would awake with a cry, and the night nurse would come over and hold my hand. This awakening got to be a habit with me until that particular nurse was transferred to another ward.

In three weeks' time, owing to the careful treatment received, I was able to sit up and get my bearings. Our ward contained seventy-five patients, 90 per cent of which were surgical cases. At the head of each bed hung a temperature chart and diagnosis sheet. Across this sheet would be written "G. S. W." or "S. W.," the former meaning gun shot wound and the latter shell wound. The "S. W." predominated, especially among the Royal Field artillery and Royal engineers.

About forty different regiments were represented, and many arguments ensued as to the respective fighting ability of each regiment. The rivalry was wonderful. A Jock arguing with an Irishman, then a strong Cockney accent would butt in in favor of a London regiment. Before long a Welshman, followed by a member of a Yorkshire regiment, and, perhaps, a Canadian intrude themselves and the argument waxes loud and furious. The patients in the beds start howling for them to settle their dispute outside and the ward is in an uproar. The head sister comes along and with a wave of the hand completely routs the doughty warriors and again silence reigns supreme.

Wednesday and Sunday of each week were visiting days and were looked forward to by the men, because they meant parcels containing fruit, sweets or fags. When a patient had a regular visitor, he was generally kept well supplied with these delicacies. Great jealousy is shown among the men as to their visitors and many word wars ensue after the visitors leave.

When a man is sent to a convalescent home, he generally turns over his steady visitor to the man in the next bed.

Most visitors have autograph albums and bore Tommy to death by asking him to write the particulars of his wounding in same. Several Tommies try to duck this unpleasant job by telling the visitors that they cannot write, but this never phases the owner of the album; he or she, generally she, offers to write it for them and Tommy is stung into telling his experiences.

The questions asked Tommy by visitors would make a clever joke book to a military man.

Some kindly looking old lady will stop at your bed and in a sympathetic voice address you: "You poor boy, wounded by those terrible Germans. You must be suffering frightful pain. A bullet, did you say? Well, tell me, I have always wanted to know, did it hurt worse going in or coming out?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

VELOCITY OF BIG SHELLS

Geometer Uses Problem of How Long Time Is Required for Stone to Fall to Center of Earth.

Studying the velocity of shells and bullets fired in the war led Maurice Sauger, a French geometer, to turn to the old question of the time it would take a stone to fall to the center of the earth. His conclusion was that it would take about 20 minutes 34 seconds.

Gassenddi, who gave the subject much thought in the last century, made the time 20 minutes even. Mersenne on the other hand contended that six hours would be required.

Sauger says that as the stone approached the center of the earth it would be drawn downward by the core of the earth and upward by the shell which it had already penetrated. The rate at which the density of the earth varies or increases as we penetrate to greater depths is unknown. Sauger's formula is based upon considerations of the moment of inertia of the earth, as calculated from the precession of the equinoxes, which agree with observations on the density of the earth conducted in mine shafts.

If a shaft were driven right through the earth the stone would appear at the Antipodes after 38 minutes 30 seconds and then return to its starting point, at which it would make its reappearance at the end of 1 hour 17 minutes.

Her Limit.

Bank Cashier—This check, madam, isn't filled in.

Madam—Isn't what?

Bank Cashier—It has your husband's name signed to it, but it does not state how much money you want.

Madam—Oh, is that all? Well, I'll take all there is.—Pearson's Weekly.

LIKE A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAVE

Lieutenant Receives Letter From Sister Long Thought to Be Dead.

Trenton, N. J.—Like a note from the grave was a letter received a short time ago by Lieut. George Dinges, stationed at Tullytown, Penn., from his sister, Mrs. A. A. Haywood of Long Hill, Conn., who was kidnaped 34 years ago when she was a baby, and who was long since given up as dead.

The story of Lieutenant Dinges and his sister being reunited reads like fiction. George Dinges and his sister, Ida May, were the only children of Mr. and Mrs. William Dinges of Mount Kis-

She Was Kidnaped.

co, Westchester county, N. Y. When Ida was two years old while she was playing about the house she suddenly disappeared.

It was later learned that she had been kidnaped. The parents spent considerable money and effort for many years in a search for her. A description of her was sent broadcast, but she could never be located.

The girl had been picked up somewhere and adopted by a Mr. and Mrs. Hebbard and taken with the family to New York, where she lived for five years. The family afterward moved to Long Hill, about eight miles from Bridgeport, Conn., where the Hebbards recently died. In their will they requested that all their legal and other papers be buried with them.

Meanwhile the missing child had grown to womanhood and had married A. A. Haywood. One child resulted from the union.

Following the deaths of the Hebbards it leaked out that Mrs. Haywood had been adopted when a child and that her real name was Dinges. This news surprised the woman and she at once began looking up all the families named Dinges throughout the country. She learned that a lieutenant named George Dinges was in the United States army and she communicated with the adjutant general, being informed later that the man she sought was stationed at Tullytown.

Mrs. Haywood went to Mount Kisco and from older residents learned more about the case, until she established the fact that Lieutenant Dinges was her brother. She then wrote to the lieutenant and he hurried to Long Hill to visit her. Mrs. Haywood inherited both money and property from the Hebbards.

HOPE TO CATCH FEMALE RAFFLES BY PERFUME

Berkeley, Cal.—Berkeley police are literally on the scent of a female Raffles who is believed to have robbed several homes lately. The female thief smokes cigarettes while she works and leaves the stubs scattered about. On each occasion a strong odor of perfume was left in the homes, and the police are sniffing all suspicious-looking females in an effort to detect a similar aroma.

BUSY DAY FOR MR. ALLISON

Gets Two Jail Sentences and One Fine All Within Few Minutes.

Fresno, Cal.—C. C. Allison walked into a restaurant with a loaf of bread under his arm, ordered a meal, cut the bread into slices and began to enjoy the feast.

Other patrons started a rumpus. The police were called and arrested Allison when he indignantly told them that he could eat as much bread as he could pay for. He was charged with disturbing the peace.

The court no sooner sentenced the man to 60 days before Allison was served with papers in a divorce action. He swore in the presence of the court stenographer and got ten days more.

Officers were about to lend him away when he was arrested for stealing water from a neighbor. He said he used the water to sprinkle his war garden. The judge assessed him $10 and called it a day.

A Call of the Wild.

"I wish to buy a motorcar horn to replace the one we now have—something distinctive," said the haughty matron.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the salesman. "Would a siren do?"

"Dear me, no. It must be something entirely different from the ordinary motor horn."

"But we have a siren that exactly imitates the howl of a timber wolf."

"Ah! That ought to suit my husband. He's a great lover of nature."

When two men are unable to agree they usually leave it to the man behind the bar.

Its Superiority.

"Yassah!" pridefully said Brother Lunk. "Dis yuh am de sweet solid gold-plated watch dat I got fum a mail awdah sto' for fou' dollahs."

"Do it keep time, sah?" asked Brother Quizz.

"Do it? Dar isn't two clocks in dis town, sah, dat kin keep up wid dis fine watch when it's right at itse'f!"—Kansas City Star.

The less a man knows about women the more he suspects they know about him.

Only the vaulting ambition of the acrobat enables him to achieve success.